

U.S. EMBASSY ABU DHABI

Introducing our newsletter

The American Citizen Services (ACS) Unit of the U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi is pleased to introduce our new, quarterly newsletter for U.S. citizens visiting and residing in our consular district (the Emirate of Abu Dhabi). We hope our newsletter will allow us to communicate information and news to enrolled citizens in an enjoyable format and will also help reduce the number of Messages to U.S. Citizens that we send to your busy e-mail boxes. We welcome your suggestions for articles or resources you would like to see in future editions.

UPCOMING PRIMARIES

South Carolina—January 21

Florida—January 31

Missouri—February 7

Arizona—February 28

Michigan—February 28

* Other states will follow throughout the spring and summer. Voter registration deadlines for primaries are as early as January 3, 2012.

American Citizen Services

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 17, 2012



Are you ready to vote?

Be an active citizen. Start thinking about your participation in the U.S. 2012 elections today!

New absentee voting laws are in effect for the 2012 elections. You will no longer automatically receive ballots based on a previous absentee ballot request. All U.S. citizens outside the United States who want to vote by absentee ballot in the 2012 primary and general elections must complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) every year if they wish to vote from abroad. States must now send out ballots 45 days before an election. No matter what state you vote in, you can now ask your local election officials to provide your blank ballots to you electronically (by email, internet download, or fax, depending on your state). You can now also confirm your registration and ballot delivery on-line. Be sure to include your email address on the form to take advantage of the electronic ballot delivery option.

You can obtain a FPCA at Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) website (see box). Depending on your state's voting requirements, you

then either send in the FPCA electronically or mail it to your local election officials. To mail it, print out the completed FPCA and the (U.S.) postage-paid envelope containing the address of your local election officials. If you bring in your forms or ballots to us we will mail them back home for you without you having to pay postage. If it's easier for you to use UAE's postal system, be sure to affix sufficient postage and allow sufficient time for international mail delivery (we recommend at least 10 days before the ballot is due).

Even if your state does not have a presidential primary in the early months of 2012, it is important that you submit a new FPCA this and every January to receive all absentee ballots for which you are eligible. By applying early, you also allow enough time for election officials to contact you and resolve any questions or problems with your registration/ballot request.

Remember that your vote counts, and that many U.S. elections within the past ten

years have been decided by a margin of victory of less than 0.1%. All states are required to count every absentee ballot as long as it's valid and reaches local election officials by the absentee ballot receipt deadline.

Be an Educated Voter. Check out the FVAP website for helpful resources that will aid your research of candidates and issues. Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues are widely available and easy to obtain via numerous websites such as Project Smart Voter. You can also read national and hometown newspapers on-line, or search the Internet to locate articles and information.



Obtain a FPCA at the FVAP website: <http://www.fvap.gov>. You may contact FVAP at 1-800-438-8683, and through email at vote@fvap.gov. You may subscribe for voter information at <http://www.fvap.gov/contact/subscription.html> and you may also friend FVAP on their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/DoDFVAP or follow @FVAP on Twitter.

Upcoming holiday Schedule

- January 15—Birthday of Martin Luther king (USA)
- February 5** — Prophet's Birthday (UAE)
- February 19— Washington's Birthday (USA)
- May 27— Memorial Day (USA)
- June 17 ** — Prophet's Ascension Day (UAE)
- July 4—Independence Day (USA)

*** Denotes UAE religious holidays which are dependent upon the sighting of the moon and are likely to vary from the above estimated dates.*

MORE INFORMATION?

Visit our website :

abudhabi.usembassy.gov

Email us:

Abudhabiacs@state.gov

Remember to schedule an appointment for American Citizen Services!



Ambassador of the United States to the United Arab Emirates

Michael H. Corbin arrived in the United Arab Emirates on July 27, 2011. He was nominated as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates by President Barack Obama on May 5, 2011. His nomination was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on June 30, and he was sworn in by Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs William J. Burns on July 25.

A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, he most recently served as Deputy Assistant Secre-

tary of State in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Prior to this assignment, he was Minister-Counselor for Political-Military Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad from 2008 to 2009 and Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Damascus, Syria from 2006 to 2008.

Ambassador Corbin served as Minister Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo from 2003 to 2006. He was Deputy Director of the Office of Arabian Peninsula Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs from 2001 to 2003. Ambassador Corbin

served as Director of the Counter-Narcotics Section at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela from 1997 to 2001 and Political-Military Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt from 1994 to 1997. His first overseas post was at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City, Kuwait from 1987 to 1989. Ambassador Corbin joined the Foreign Service in 1985.

Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Ambassador Corbin served in the Peace Corps from 1982 to 1984 in Mauritania. He received a bachelor's degree from Swarthmore College.

Debit and Credit Card Alert

The US Embassy recently issued a Message to US Citizens regarding debit and credit card skimming. This was based on information from our Regional Security Officer noting a rise in instances of debit cards "skimmed" at locations in the Khaladiya area of Abu Dhabi.

A "skimmer" is a device that is mounted to the front of an

ATM card slot that reads ATM card numbers as well as PIN numbers and transmits the information to thieves nearby. Hidden cameras can also be used to capture card information and PINs.

Debit card skimming is very uncommon in the UAE and historically has not been an issue that has impacted our

community. The recent debit card skimming incidents have been brought to the attention of Abu Dhabi Police. We recommend that you consider avoiding ATMs in the Khaladiya area, to include Spinneys and Khaladiya Mall, for the immediate future until more information becomes available.

What does the consular section do?

Have a friend who wants to visit the US? A business associate who will be meeting with suppliers in Houston? A friend who will study at the University of California? You should refer them to our website for information on how to apply for a US non-immigrant visa.

Has your sister's alien relative petition been approved by USCIS? Has your parent lost their Legal Permanent Resident card (Green Card)? Are you finalizing your child's adoption and immigrating him to the US? Check the immigrant visa section of our website for more information.

Need a new passport? Just had a baby and need to obtain a consular report of birth abroad? Has your nephew lost his passport while visiting you over the Christmas break? Did your friend get arrested for not paying her debts? Check the American Citizen Services (ACS) section of our website.

Your Privacy Is Paramount.

All the personal information you provide to us is protected under the Privacy Act of 1974. This law prohibits us from sharing the information with anyone *without your written authorization*. Certain exceptions exist, such as when we need to share information on a limited basis in order to protect your safety and welfare in extreme circumstances.

Why enroll with the Embassy?



By connecting with us using STEP, the Department of State will be able to assist you better in the case of an emergency, such as if you lose your passport or it is stolen while you are abroad.

The Department of State also assists U.S. citizens in other emergencies, such as in natural disasters. For example, after the earthquake in Haiti, we evacuated over 16,700 U.S. citizens. During the civil unrest in Lebanon in 2006 we assisted nearly 15,000 U.S. citizens, and in 2004 we

helped thousands more during the Asian tsunami.

The travel and contact information you enter into STEP will make it easier for consular officers in U.S. embassies and consulates around the world to contact you and your loved ones during an emergency — including situations where your family or friends in the U.S. are having problems trying to contact you with important news.

We believe that a well-informed traveler is a safer traveler. Our

consular officers around the world compile country-specific information, travel alerts, travel warnings, fact sheets and messages to provide you with timely and accurate travel information about every country where you may travel. We include reports on possible risks and security threats so that you can make informed decisions about your travel plans and activities. These reports are available at <http://travel.state.gov>.

<http://travel.state.gov/STEP>



On December 11, 2011, the our Embassy wardens were invited to a morning tea with the Ambassador. Wardens from Abu Dhabi and Al Ain met with Ambassador Corbin, Consul General Harold

Tea with the Ambassador

Aluyen, as well as the American Citizen Services staff.

Ambassador Corbin expressed his gratitude for the warden's service, and reminded the wardens of their important role, especially in the event of an emergency.

The wardens were asked to encourage American citizens

to enroll in STEP. They were also given information regarding US elections and voting and updated on new procedural changes including our new appointment system. We encouraged the wardens to communicate any information they believe would be helpful in serving the American community in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.



Our new Consul General

Hello. I am happy to introduce myself, Christine Harold-Aluyen, as the Embassy's new Consul General, or Chief of the Embassy's consular operations. I arrived in the UAE in September and have quickly settled in to life in Abu Dhabi and the exciting and meaningful work we do here at the Embassy. I am a career Foreign

Service Officer and Consular Officer who has previously completed seven overseas and one domestic assignment with the Department of State. Most recently I served in our Embassy in Mexico City, Mexico. Before joining the Foreign Service, I worked as an attorney in Washington, D.C. and I call the great state of North Carolina

home (and UNC-Chapel Hill my alma mater). I have already had the opportunity to meet many of our citizens in Abu Dhabi, including several of our warden volunteers. I look forward to getting to know many more of you and welcome your feedback regarding our services.